

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image-taking apparatus which is operated through a network from a terminal apparatus and which distributes  
5 taken images over the network, comprising:

an image-taking optical system;

an image-pickup device which photoelectrically converts an object image formed by the image-taking optical system;

10 a controller which performs, by using the image-pickup device, image-taking in a first mode and image-taking in a second mode in which image-taking is carried out with more pixels or at a lower frame rate than in the first mode;

15 wherein the controller determines whether a condition relating to image-taking matches a predetermined restriction condition, and performs a restriction operation which restricts image-taking in the second mode or distribution of an image taken in the second mode when the  
20 restriction condition is met.

2. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein the restriction operation is a prohibition of the image-taking in the second mode or the distribution of  
25 the image taken in the second mode.

3. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the restriction operation is an allowing of the image-taking in the second mode or the distribution of the image taken in the second mode after performing an operation for excluding the condition relating to the  
5 image-taking from the predetermined condition.

4. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein a focal length of the image-taking optical system is variable; and  
10 wherein the controller determines whether the focal length is equal to or longer than a predetermined focal length, and performs the restriction operation when the focal length is equal to or longer than the predetermined focal length.

15  
5. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 4,  
wherein the controller further determines whether an object distance is equal to or shorter than a predetermined object distance, and performs the restriction operation  
20 when the focal length is equal to or longer than the predetermined focal length and the object distance is equal to or shorter than the predetermined object distance.

6. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 4,  
25 wherein, as the restriction operation, the controller allows the image-taking in the second mode and the distribution of the image taken in the second mode after

changing the focal length to a focal length which is shorter than the predetermined focal length.

7. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,

5 wherein the controller has a function of recognizing an object in an image-taking field, identifies whether the recognized object is a specific object, and performs the restriction operation when the object is the specific object.

10

8. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 7,

wherein the specific object is a person or a window of a building.

15 9. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the controller determines whether an image-taking field contains a predetermined restricted image-taking region, and performs the restriction operation when the image-taking field contains the predetermined  
20 restricted image-taking region.

10. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the controller determines whether the image-taking optical system is focused on an object, and performs  
25 the restriction operation when the image-taking optical system is not focused on the object.

11. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein the controller determines whether a  
predetermined exposure is attained with the image-pickup  
device, and performs the restriction operation when the  
5 predetermined exposure is not attained.

12. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein, when the distribution of the image taken in  
the second mode is prohibited as the restriction operation,  
10 the controller saves the taken image to a memory from where  
image can be read out only by an administrator of the  
image-taking apparatus.

13. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,  
15 wherein the controller sends warning information to  
the terminal apparatus when performing the restriction  
operation.

14. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 1,  
20 wherein the predetermined restriction condition can  
be changed only by an administrator of the image-taking  
apparatus.

15. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 10,  
25 wherein, after carrying out the restriction operation,  
the controller performs the image-taking in the second mode  
and distribution of the image taken in the second mode if

the controller receives a signal commanding image-taking in the second mode from the terminal apparatus.

16. The image-taking apparatus according to claim 11,

5        wherein, after carrying out the restriction operation, the controller performs the image-taking in the second mode and distribution of the image taken in the second mode if the controller receives a signal commanding image-taking in the second mode from the terminal apparatus.

10

17. An image-taking system, comprising:

the image-taking apparatus according to claim 1; and

an administrative computer with which an

administrator of the image-taking apparatus can control the

15 image-taking apparatus through the network.

18. An image-taking system, comprising:

the image-taking apparatus according to claim 1; and

a terminal apparatus which operates the image-taking

20 apparatus through the network and which receives a distribution of taken image.